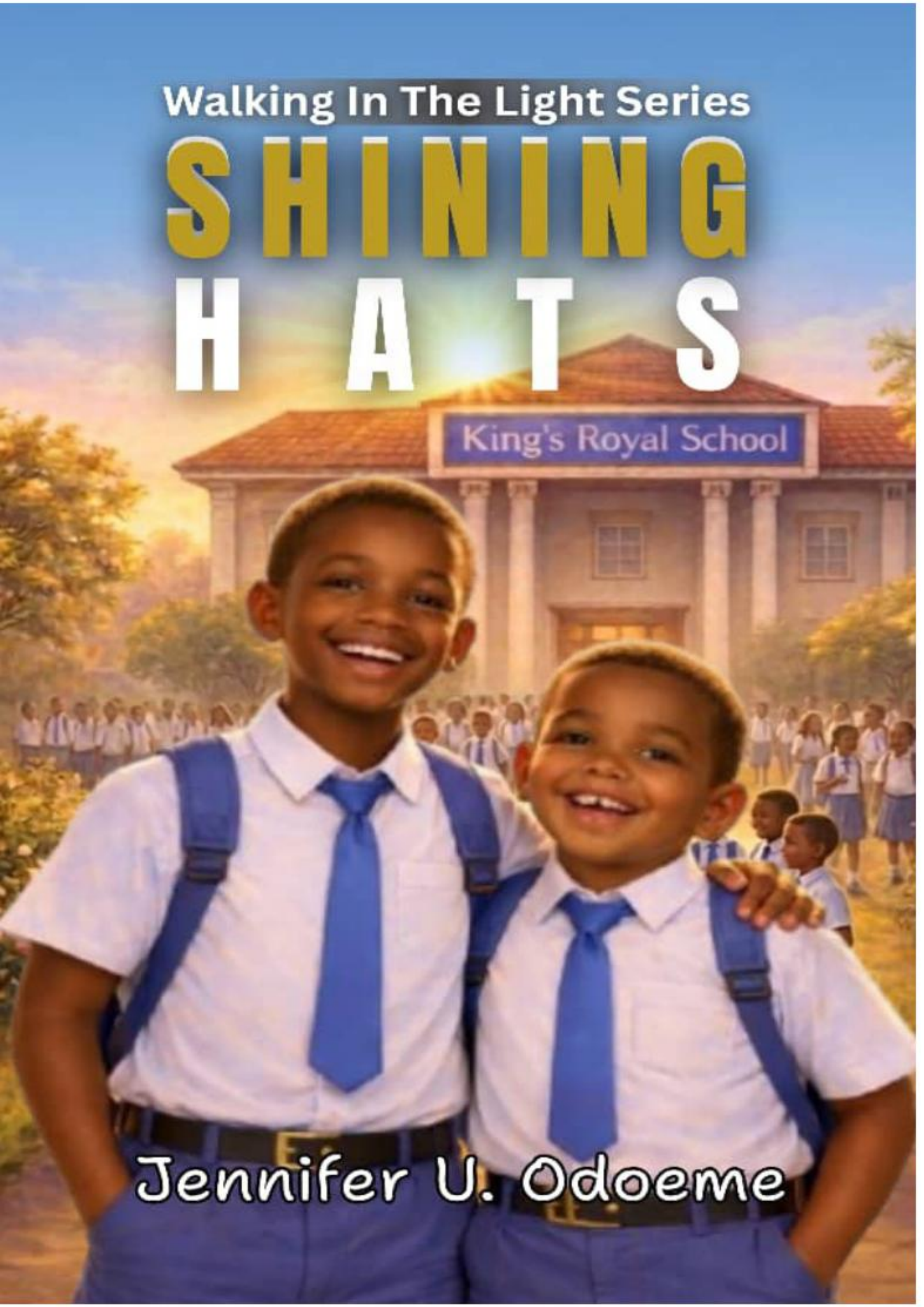
Walking In The Light Series

SHINING HATS



Jennifer U. Odoeme

SHINING HATS

Series Title:
Walking in the Light

By: Jennifer U Odoeme

SHINING HATS

Walking in the Light

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Published by: Peakland Essentials

ISBN: 978-978-68-2517-5

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CHAPTER ONE
The Long-Tailed Dog

The Ekene's house in Festac Town, Lagos, was never truly quiet. It was the kind of home that hummed with the smell of Lillian's cooking drifting from the kitchen; the soft click of her digital pen as she worked on her designs and the sound of Mr. Simon's deep voice reading scriptures during morning devotion. It was a home built on two things: faith and family.

Mr. Simon Ekene was a forty-five-year-old lawyer, a senior partner at Peakland Attorneys and a deacon at one of the Pentecostal churches. He was a tall and hardworking man, and he carried himself with the calm confidence of someone who had learned to trust God even in difficult courtrooms.

His wife Lillian was a graphic designer who worked from home. Her work table was always filled with colorful drawings, digital pens, and creative designs. Daniel and Gabriel loved sitting beside her, offering funny ideas and laughing at her work. She was gentle, creative, and had a special gift of turning any ordinary moment into a Bible lesson. Together, they were raising two brilliant boys, Daniel and Gabriel, whose energy, questions, and unusual ideas kept their home lively.

Daniel, the older brother, was nine years old. He was calm, thoughtful, and loved his books. Gabriel, seven years old, was the entertainer of the house. He was loud, dramatic, and believed that every problem can be solved with a clever idea or sometimes a snack. At school, their classmates joked that the brothers had “Wi-Fi brains,” because they always had an answer for everything.

One quiet evening, Daniel lay on his bed studying for his upcoming exams. The room was decorated with bright cartoon wallpaper. Across the room, Gabriel sat at the study table, happily drawing a very skinny dog with a long funny tail.

Daniel looked at him and frowned.
“Gabriel,” he said gently, “why are you drawing instead of studying for your mathematics exam?”
Gabriel shrugged. “I am tired. I need a break.”
“But you studied for four minutes,” Daniel replied.
“Four minutes is a very long time, Daniel. That is exactly how long it
takes to cook Indomie.”

Daniel put down his book. He folded his hands like a pastor preparing to deliver a difficult sermon.
“It is with great sadness to inform you,” he said jokingly, “that if you don’t study, the Holy Spirit will have nothing to

remind you of during your exams." Gabriel rolled his eyes.
"But, I have good news," Daniel added quickly.
Gabriel looked up. "What good news?"
"The Holy Spirit will comfort you when you fail. He will never leave you nor forsake you."

Gabriel laughed, rolled a paper into a ball, and threw it at Daniel, who dodged it and laughed loudly. Just then, their mother appeared at the bedroom door. Lillian Ekene always seemed to arrive at precisely the right moment. She stopped when she saw Gabriel's strange drawing.
"Gabriel," she said gently, "there is a time for everything, a time to draw and a time to study."
"Mummy," Gabriel groaned, "that is not even in the Bible."
"It is," Lillian smiled, "when you study, you are planting knowledge. During your exams, you harvest what you planted."

Gabriel slowly closed the drawing book, Lillian sat beside him.
"The Bible also says that a diligent child will stand before great people," she added.
"That is Proverbs 22:29," Daniel said proudly.
"Yes, dear," Lillian replied with a smile.

"And the verse about time?" Daniel asked.
"Ecclesiastes 3:1 and 2," Gabriel answered quickly.
Lillian beamed and patted his head.
"Correct. Now please study to show yourself approved to God…."
"…rightly dividing the word of truth."

The boys shouted together and burst into laughter. Even their mother smiled, but tried to hide it. As she stood up to leave, Gabriel reached out and gently tugged at her skirt.
"Mummy," he said softly, "I don't understand long division." Lillian sat beside him again.
"Darling, if you need wisdom, ask God."
"I prayed," Gabriel replied, "but I still do not understand."

His voice had gone quiet, the voice he used only when he was truly worried. Lillian looked at Daniel. Just one look, that was all she needed to say.
"I will help him, ma," Daniel replied quickly. Gabriel's eyes filled with tears.
"Daniel, please help me."
Lillian smiled, patted Gabriel's head, and quietly left the room. Daniel watched her go, thinking about how she always had the right scripture for every moment; never shouted, never lectured, just planted the word gently and let it grow. He climbed down from his bed and sat beside

Gabriel.
"Let's start with an easy one," Daniel said gently. "Are you ready? 96 ÷ 3?"
"How many times can 3 go into 9?" Daniel asked.
"Three," Gabriel replied.
"Correct. Write 3 above the 9. Now bring down the 6. How many times can 3 go into 6?" Daniel asked.
"Two," Gabriel shouted confidently. Daniel smiled.
"So the answer is 32." Gabriel's eyes widened.
"That was easy."
"Yes," Daniel said.
"You just need to follow the steps."

They worked on through the evening; harder questions, remainders, carrying numbers over. Gabriel groaned, crossed things out, groaned again, and tried once more. Slowly, something shifted. The numbers stopped looking like enemies.
"I understand it now," Gabriel said excitedly.
"You are smart, Gabriel. You just need patience and practice."
"Mummy will be proud of me," Gabriel said happily.
"She will," Daniel replied. "And we will practice again tomorrow."

That night, Gabriel learned that mathematics was not impossible; he only needed patience, prayer and help

from his big brother. Daniel looked at his brother sleeping peacefully; he opened his notebook and wrote one line before turning off the light:

"When I choose patience, stay faithful, and help others, my hat shines brighter."
He fell asleep thinking about his dream of becoming a doctor. But did he really have what it takes to achieve it?

QUESTIONS

Objectives

1. What was Gabriel doing instead of studying for his exams?

a. Praying b. Drawing a dog with a long tail c. Eating

2. Which subject was Gabriel struggling to understand?

a. English Language b. Social Studies c. Mathematics

3. Which Bible verse did their mother quote about 'time'?

a. Proverbs 22:29 b. Ecclesiastes 3:1, 2 c. John 3:16

Theory

4. Describe the character of Lillian Ekene?

_____

_____

5. Do you think Daniel was a good brother? Give two reasons. _____

_____

6. What does the phrase "harvest what you planted" mean? How does it apply to studying for an exam?

_____

CHAPTER TWO
The Secrets of Shining Hats

Daniel was a handsome boy with bright, curious eyes. His eyes always looked as if they were watching and learning at the same time. His dark brown skin glowed with good health, and for his age, he stood tall and confident.

People often said Daniel carried himself like someone much older, not because he was proud, but because he was calm, patient, and thoughtful. Daniel was gentle and kind and he was always ready to help anyone in need. Deep in his heart, he had one big dream. He wanted to become a doctor, not just any doctor, but a doctor like Ben Carson.

Daniel wanted to help people the way Jesus did, with wisdom, compassion and love. Whenever Gabriel scraped his knee or bumped his elbow, he never went to their mother. He went straight to Daniel, limping dramatically around the living room.

"Doctor Daniel," Gabriel would sniff and ask dramatically, "am I going to survive?"

Daniel would stand up, pretend to wear a stethoscope and examine the scratch with great seriousness.

“You will live, Gabriel. The injury is only 0.002 percent serious.” Gabriel would jump up at once.
“Thank God. Let me go and eat biscuits.”
“You were not dying,” Daniel said calmly. “You were just being dramatic.”
“Drama is in my blood,” Gabriel replied proudly.

Lillian always laughed when she heard these exchanges. She called Daniel “Doctor Daniel,” half joking, half believing it completely.

One Saturday morning, Daniel woke up very early. Gabriel heard him reading and opened one sleepy eye.
“Why are you awake?” he mumbled.
“Today is not school. Today is a sleepy day.”
Daniel smiled. “I want to study the human body.”
Gabriel stood up so fast his pillow fell off the bed.
“Do humans have bodies?”
Daniel stared at him. “Gabriel, please.”
“But today is Saturday.”
“Especially on a Saturday. Doctors don’t rest just because it is the weekend,” Daniel replied with a smile. Just then, Mr. Simon walked into the room holding a cup of tea.
“You are up early, Daniel,” Mr. Simon smiled.
“Yes, Daddy,” Daniel replied. “I want to learn more about doctors. I want to help people someday.”
Mr. Simon smiled proudly.

“Being a doctor is a noble calling. It takes discipline, kindness, and wisdom. Most of all, you must let God guide your heart.” Daniel nodded. He liked it when Daddy spoke like a lawyer and a pastor at the same time; serious, wise, and a little funny.

After breakfast, their mother invited them to her art table. Gabriel shouted happily.
“Art! Paint! Mess!”

They worked side by side, Lillian sketching with her professional ease; Daniel drawing careful diagrams of the human eye from memory, Gabriel drawing a strange animal that is yet to be discovered on planet Earth. Suddenly, Gabriel poked his finger with a pencil.
“Ouch!” he cried. “I have been attacked!”
“It is just a scratch,” Lillian said. But Gabriel was already rolling on the rug.
“I need medical help, call doctor Daniel.” Daniel rushed over, cleaned the scratch gently, placed a paper bandage on it and patted Gabriel’s head.
“You are okay now,” he said. Gabriel jumped up at once.
“Wow! I feel healed. Your doctor power is working.” Lillian laughed softly.
“Daniel, you really act like a doctor.”
“I am practicing,” Daniel replied shyly.

Later that afternoon, while Lillian was busy in the kitchen stirring a pot of egusi soup, a car pulled up outside. Pastor Samuel Abu, the humble and God-fearing pastor of Everlasting Rock Parish, visited to pray with the family. As he stepped out of the car, his head lightly hit the door.
"Ah! My head." Gabriel's eyes went wide, he spun around.
"Don't move sir. We have a doctor in this house."

Daniel rushed forward before Gabriel could say anything else, gently guided Pastor Samuel to a chair on the veranda, and checked the spot carefully.
"Does it hurt here, sir?" Daniel asked gently.
"It is fine, my boy. Just a small bump."
"Please sit for a moment. Just to be sure." Pastor Samuel looked at him with a wide, delighted smile.
"This boy, already a doctor at nine years old."

Just then, the door opened and Mr. Simon stepped outside. He had heard the noise and came to see what was happening. He watched Daniel carefully checking the Pastor's head, then walked over and placed both hands gently on the boy's shoulders.
"Well done, Daniel," he said with a quiet smile. "A good doctor listens before he acts. You are learning well, son."

That evening, the boys lay on their beds with their books,

hoping to travel to Delta State during the August holiday, but only if they did very well in their exams. So they read. Gabriel lasted about ten minutes before groaning loudly at his books.
"I am exhausted. Let's play our quote game." Daniel smiled. "Daddy Adeboye's book?"
"Yes. Be the Best, Be the Very Best," Gabriel said eagerly.

They took turns quoting, treating each line like a treasure, each one a secret of shining hats. Daniel began calmly.
"You are to love your neighbor like yourself, not more than yourself. Be number one and wish your neighbor the best."
"That means winning with kindness," Gabriel pointed out. He sat up straighter and said loudly,
"Many run in a race but only one wins. Be the one that wins."
"That means no laziness," Daniel laughed and continued.
"Outside forces intend to slow you down, stop you and then push you back, but what is inside of you is more than enough to overcome all resistance." Gabriel's eyes widened.
"That sounds like mathematics fighting me."
Daniel nodded. "And you still win." Gabriel smiled proudly and fired back.
"Forgetting the past, I press forward: Old victories are like ashes, beware lest they put out your fire and you become

an ex-this or ex-that. Go for fresh victories always." He looked thoughtful for a second and asked,
"Even if I did well last term, I must study harder?"
"Yes," Daniel answered. Gabriel stretched his arms and yawned loudly.
"Daniel, I am exhausted." Daniel laughed and delivered the final quote like a victory speech,
"At the end of the race, every runner is exhausted. It is the joy of victory that gives the victor strength to run the victory lap…."
"Don't be exhausted for nothing: run to win," they chorused together.
"Agåånaagåm," Gabriel groaned, "I am hungry." They laughed, climbed down from their beds and ran downstairs for dinner, tired but smiling, their hearts filled with wisdom.

That night, as the house grew quiet, Daniel sat on the edge of his bed thinking. He thought about Ben Carson who had used his hands and his mind to save people that everyone else had given up on. He thought about his father's words: 'Let God guide your heart, not your hands.' He thought about Gabriel who made everything louder, funnier and somehow better. He opened his notebook and wrote underneath yesterday's entry:

The secrets of shining hats: discipline, holiness, endurance, love, and running life's race according to God's rules.

He did not know yet that the following week, Gabriel would come home from school with an unusual look on his face, something had happened to his friend Bright, and it was not okay.

QUESTIONS

Objectives

1. Which famous doctor did Daniel want to be like when he grew up?

   a. Royal Odoeme b. Ben Carson c. Albert Schweitzer

2. What happened to Pastor Samuel when he arrived at the Ekene's house?

   a. He bought gifts for the boys b. He bumped his head on the car door c. He joined the boys to play the quote game.

3. What does the Igbo word "Agåånaagåm" mean in English?

   a. I am hungry b. I am happy. C. I am thirsty

Theory

4. Why does Daniel want to become a doctor?

   _____

5. What qualities does Daniel have that make him suitable for the medical profession?

   _____

6. Write one quote from Daddy Adeboye's book in this chapter._____

CHAPTER THREE
The Boy behind the Lies

Daniel and Gabriel attended Kings Royal School, just a short walk from their home. Every day after the bell rang; he waited for Gabriel at the school gate and they walked home together through the familiar roads of Festac Town, past the buka that smelled of pepper soup, past the mechanic workshop with its cheerful noise.

Gabriel always talked the entire way. He had opinions about everything; his teacher, his classmates, what he planned to eat, why he preferred dogs to cats. But today, Gabriel was silent. He walked with his school bag hanging low off one shoulder and his eyes fixed on the ground. For Gabriel, this was deeply alarming. It was like a drum that suddenly stopped beating.

"What happened?" Daniel asked. Gabriel glanced up, then back down.
"Bright got embarrassed today, in front of everyone." Daniel slowed his pace to match his brother's.
"Tell me," Daniel said quietly.

As they walked on, Gabriel told him about Bright Kolade; his best friend since Primary Two Diamond, the boy who had sat next to him on the very first day of class, looked at

his class work and whispered,
“You are good, but I am better. We should be friends.”

Gabriel had laughed so hard that their class teacher Miss Grace looked up. Bright was lively and full of jokes. He tapped his pencils on his desk like a drum set, and could make Gabriel laugh with just one funny look.
Numbers made sense to him, words came easily, and exams never frightened him. He was, in almost every way, a wonderful friend.

Except for one thing, Bright loved to tell stories that were not true. One day, his parents lived in America. Another day, they were in Kenya. Sometimes, he had three house helps. Other times, he lived in a huge mansion with a swimming pool, the size of a river.

Even when there was no reason to lie, he did. Gabriel had always listened quietly, unsure whether to laugh, correct him, or ignore the stories.

That afternoon, at break time, Bright had been bragging in the classroom, a circle of classmates gathered around him.

“My school shoes are sent to India every month for special polishing. These ones were made in Canada,” he

bragged loudly. A boy named Donald looked down at his own feet, then at Bright's, then looked at Bright with a slow, mischievous smile.

"Bright, my shoes have the exact same label as yours."
Bright looked at his shoes. He looked at Donald's shoes. He opened his mouth to speak, and then closed it again. Then, very slowly, he sat down on his seat and whispered, "I… I lied." The crowd drifted away, murmuring and laughing. But Gabriel had stayed, he always stayed.

They had reached the mango tree, where they usually stopped to check for ripe fruits. On most days, they would raise their heads up, searching the branches for the bright yellow mangoes that sometimes hid among the leaves. But today, neither of them looked up. Their feet slowed the way they always did out of habit, then kept moving.

"What did you say to him?" Daniel asked, his voice quiet and serious.
"I told him the truth. I said Bright, I am your best friend. But I cannot be your friend if you keep lying. It is not fair to me, and it is not fair to you."
"How did he react?" Daniel asked again.
"He cried," Gabriel answered, "then he told me something he had never told anyone." Daniel waited.

Bright's home, Gabriel explained, was very different from theirs. His parents were bankers who left early every morning and returned late every night. Sundays were the only days they stayed home, and even then, they mostly slept. They did not go to church. Bright knew very little about God. Whenever he complained about the loneliness, his parents kissed his head, and said the same words:

"We work hard because we love you," his mother said.
"We want to give you a bright future," his father added.

Bright always nodded, but inside he felt lonely. He also carried a painful secret. Bright could not see with his left eye. A cataract had damaged it badly, because hospital appointments were missed; the problem was ignored for too long, and by the time doctors looked at it, the sight could not be saved, but they had repaired it to look normal from the outside.

The only person who knew about his eyes was Mrs. Ngozi, the house keeper. She cooked and cleaned, but her words were never kind.

"This schooling is a waste of money. With that blind eye, what is the use? Better save the money now, so someone will take care of you when you go blind completely."

Her words scared Bright deeply. At night, he lay awake, imagining darkness creeping in from the right side. So he studied hard with his good eye and told big stories to fill the silence.

"If blindness comes," he had told himself, "it will meet a sharp mind, not an empty one."

By now, the brothers had stopped walking altogether. They stood in front of their gate, the afternoon sun warm on their backs, neither of them in any hurry to go inside.

"What did you say to him after he told you all of that?" Daniel asked.

"I told him what mummy always tells us. That God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind." Daniel nodded thoughtfully.

"I also told him that lies may sound funny, but they lead to trouble. The Bible says the devil is the father of lies, and liars are separated from God. But Jesus came to help people who want to change. So, I told him the story of the man who was born blind from birth and was healed by Jesus, not because the man was perfect, but because Jesus is good. I told Bright Jesus sees him too."

Daniel looked at his younger brother with quiet admiration. Seven years old, he thought, and already knows so much.
"What did Bright say?" Daniel asked with a wide smile.
"He said: 'If Jesus could help someone who never saw at all, then He has not forgotten me.' He also said he wants to stop lying, and begged me to tell him more about Jesus."
"Then you must. Tell him that Jesus gives light, hope, and a new life. When we trust Him, we never walk alone."
"I will," Gabriel replied confidently.

They pushed the gate open and walked into the compound. The smell of their mother's cooking reached them before they even got to the door; jollof rice with fried chicken, the warm spicy aroma floated through the air and wrapped around them like a welcome hug. For the first time since they had left school, a small smile crossed their faces.

"Mummy made jollof rice," Gabriel smiled and quickened his steps.

That evening, Gabriel was his usual loud self, laughing and talking loudly.

Mr. Simon led a short Bible study and prayed specifically for Bright; that the lies would stop, that God would hear

l the loneliness in his home, and that his destiny would not be cut short. Gabriel bowed his head a little longer than usual and his lips moved quietly. He was praying for Bright. Daniel knew it without being told.

As the boys climbed into bed that night, Daniel opened his notebook and wrote:

Choosing truth is hard, but it is the first step toward a shining hat.

Neither of them knew that in a week's time, the whole school would be watching, and Bright's new choice would be tested in front of everyone.

QUESTIONS

Objectives

1. What physical challenge did Bright secretly carry?
   a. A broken arm b. A bleeding nose c. Poor sight in his left eye

2. Who exposed Bright's lie about his school shoes?
   a. Donald b. Cephas c. Gabriel

3. Where did Daniel and Gabriel discuss about Bright?
   a. In their bedroom at home b. Walking home from school together c. During lunch break

Theory

4. Why do you think Bright told so many lies?

   _____

   _____

5. What did Gabriel tell Bright about Jesus and the man born blind? _____

   _____

6. How did Gabriel show that he was a caring friend to Bright? _____

   _____

   _____

CHAPTER FOUR
Most Creative Young Scientist

The lessons from Daddy Adeboye's quotes stayed with Daniel as he prepared for a new week at school. 'Run to win; endure unto the end, overcome all resistance.' The words echoed in his heart, reminding him that true success comes from patience, endurance, and determination.

The Annual Science fair announcement hit Kings Royal School like a thunderclap on a clear day. Teachers pinned notices on every board. Pupils whispered excitedly in corridors and classrooms. By the time the final bell rang that Monday, the whole school was buzzing.

Every pupil had three days to prepare a project, and the best would be judged in front of the entire school. Teachers explained that all projects would be done in teams, and pupils were encouraged to choose partners they could trust.

Daniel, in Primary Four Diamond, was approached by his classmate Samson, who was nicknamed 'Tallest' because of his height. He walked up to Daniel, rubbing the back of his neck shyly.

"Daniel," he said, "will you be my partner for the science fair? You explain things so well."
Daniel smiled. "Sure! Let's work together."

Bright, on the other hand, did not ask Gabriel. He simply threw an arm around him.
"We are partners, Gabriel! This science fair will remember our names. " Gabriel smiled, knowing Bright always had surprises in his projects.

On Tuesday evening, Mr. Simon returned home earlier than usual from work.
"Daniel, Gabriel, have you decided on your projects?" he asked.
Daniel nodded. "Yes, sir. Samson and I will make a small water filter."
Gabriel raised his hands. "Bright and I will build a volcano that explodes gently."
Daniel laughed. "I will help you, but no real explosions."
"Okay," Gabriel sighed, "tiny explosions."
Mr. Simon smiled at Gabriel and patted Daniel's head.
"A man who helps his brother is stronger than one who conquers a city. God bless you, son."

That evening, the dining table became a laboratory. Daniel worked quietly, measuring, sketching diagrams, and whispering prayers for wisdom at intervals. Gabriel

arrived wearing their mother's old goggles, and a napkin tied around his neck. He climbed on to a chair and spread his arms wide.
"Science Boy Gabriel is ready."
Daniel giggled. "You are supposed to build, not perform."
"Science is performance, Daniel. The judges must be impressed," he replied.
"The judges will be impressed by your results not your goggles."
Gabriel mixed baking soda and vinegar in a cup. It fizzed and bubbled over the rim immediately.
"Daniel! It's alive!" Daniel grabbed tissues. "You need supervision," he muttered.

Mr. Simon peeked in from the sitting room.
"Are you boys working together?"
"Yes, Daddy," Gabriel said proudly. "I am the assistant inventor."
Mr. Simon nodded. "Good. God blesses teamwork and hard work."

Science Club and Final Preparations
At Science Club on Wednesday, their science teacher Mr. Joe, who was nicknamed Doctor Mercury because of his love for chemical experiments, gathered all the teams together in the science hall. He looked around the room slowly before he spoke.

"Listen carefully. A brilliant project with dishonesty inside it is worth nothing. Teamwork and honesty matter more than winning. Remember that on Friday."

Gabriel glanced sideways at Bright. Bright was looking straight ahead, his jaw set. He had told Gabriel he wanted to change. But wanting and doing, Gabriel knew, were two very different things.

SCIENCE FAIR
Friday arrived smelling of fresh paint and nervous energy. The Science hall was transformed beautifully. Colorful projects covered every table: spinning wheels, blinking bulbs, bubbling liquids, handmade bridges and models of everything from solar system to the human heart.

Mrs. Bolanle, Daniel's class teacher, walked through the crowded hall with a big smile, stopping to pat a shoulder here and give a thumbs-up there. She picked up the microphone and gently tapped it once; the soft sound echoed through the hall, and immediately, the chatter began to fade as everyone turned their heads towards her.
"Everyone, get ready," she announced clearly, her voice carrying across the hall. She paused for a moment, letting the excitement settle.

“The judges are coming. Stand up straight and do your best.”

The judges, led by Doctor Mercury, moved carefully from table to table. Daniel and Samson demonstrated their water filter with quiet confidence: muddy water poured in at the top, clean water trickling out at the bottom through layers of sand, stones, and cotton. The judges nodded, really impressed.

“Excellent teamwork and very clear explanation. Well done,” one judge commented.

Then came the noisier experiments. One team’s volcano erupted too early, and splashed foam on a boy’s shoes. Another project produced so much smoke that the windows had to be opened. Finally, it was Bright and Gabriel’s turn. Bright stepped forward confidently; shoulders back, chin up, the same Bright who had claimed his shoes were polished in India. A judge smiled and raised a clipboard.

“Where did you get your materials for this project?”
“My uncle sent the chemicals specially from abroad, sir,” Bright said proudly, “they are imported materials.”

The hall was quiet for a second, then Doctor Mercury,

who was standing to the side stepped forward.

“Bright, I personally signed these chemicals out from our school science lab on Wednesday. Mrs. Adeyemi has the record.”

The hall went very still. Bright’s confident smile faded completely. He looked at his shoes, then at Gabriel. Gabriel looked at him with an expression that said: I told you.

“I am sorry, sir,” Bright said nervously, “that was not true, we got the chemicals from the school lab.”

Doctor Mercury nodded slowly. “Thank you for correcting yourself. But remember, lies spoil good efforts.”
Gabriel stepped forward quickly and cleared his throat.

“Ladies and gentlemen, what you are about to witness is a volcano that explodes politely.”

A few people in the hall laughed, breaking the tension. Gabriel poured the vinegar. The volcano bubbled and fizzed slightly, foam spilling over the rim. He raised his hands and smiled confidently.

“Behold… science!”

The Results

When all projects were judged, Daniel and Samson won First Place for
their water filter's clear design, excellent teamwork and strong explanation. The hall clapped warmly.

Bright and Gabriel did not receive any prize. The lie had cost them marks they could not recover, and their written report was very thin. Bright stared at the floor, he did not cry this time. He simply looked like someone who had learnt something the hard way. Then Doctor Mercury stepped to the front with a separate envelope.

"This year, we are giving one special award to the pupil who showed both creativity and courage today," he continued, "**The Most Creative Young Scientist** is … Gabriel Ekene"

Gabriel blinked. Everyone clapped cheerfully. He walked up slowly, shook Doctor Mercury's hand with great dignity, and turned to face the hall.

"Thank you, sir. I want to dedicate this to my partner Bright, who I believe will do better next time. Also, to my brother Daniel, whose supervision I did not ask for but which was, I admit, occasionally useful."

Laughter filled the hall. Even Bright smiled, a small, tired, but genuine smile.

On the walk home, it was Bright who was quiet this time. He walked with his hands in his pocket, head down, saying nothing. Gabriel walked beside him. Daniel walked just behind, giving them some space. After a long silence, Bright spoke.

"I almost did not lie. I thought about what you told me. About Jesus."

"But you still lied," Gabriel replied.

There was another silence. Then Gabriel said, quietly but clearly.
"Wanting to change is not the same as changing, but you corrected yourself in front of everyone. That took courage and it is a good start."

Bright nodded slowly. They walked the rest of the way in silence. From that day, Bright began to change, not all at once, but truly. The lies tried to return, but a new voice inside of him, reminded him to choose honesty.

At home, Lillian congratulated the boys on their wins and thanked Gabriel specifically for not blowing up the dining

table with his experiment.

“Next year… maybe a little boom?” Gabriel grinned mischievously.

That evening, their mother taught them *that* ***wisdom, honesty, and teamwork always lead to lasting success, and real change takes time and courage.***

Daniel wrote in his notebook while listening to her. Afterward, they prayed again for Bright, that the next test would find him stronger than the last. They did not know that Bright’s next test would come sooner than any of them expected, and this time, the whole playground would be watching.

QUESTIONS

Objectives

1. How much time did the teams have to prepare for science fair?

   a. Three days b. One month c. One week

2. What project did Daniel and Samson build for the science fair?

   a. A model volcano b. A water-filtering system c. A robot

3. Why did Gabriel and Bright not win a prize?

   a. Their project failed b. They came late c. Bright told a lie to the judges and their report was weak

Theory

4. What did Doctor Mercury say about honesty and teamwork? _____

   _____

5. How does change in behavior really happen?

   _____

   _____

6. What special title was later given to Gabriel, and why?_____

   _____

CHAPTER FIVE
The Boy with the Shining Hat

It was a bright Monday morning and the playground at Kings Royal School was full of noise and laughter. Children chased each other between the swings and the benches, and somewhere on the far side of the yard, a group of boys were kicking a bottle cap around like a football.

Daniel, Gabriel, and Bright sat together on a bench, sharing a packet of chin chin. It had been three days since the Science Fair and pupils were still talking about experiments, teamwork, and the lessons they had learnt on honesty and following the rules. Bright had been quieter than usual, not sad exactly, but more thoughtful.

Unlike Bright, Daniel felt different that morning. His heart felt light and happy, as if something special was going to happen. Gabriel noticed it at once.

"Why are you smiling like someone who swallowed a rainbow?" he asked, narrowing his eyes.

Daniel shrugged. "I don't know. I just feel like today will be important."

Gabriel gasped loudly. "You are finally getting superpowers?"
Daniel sighed. "No, Gabriel."
"Is that why you are sharing your break time with me instead of…."
"Yes," Daniel interrupted him.
Gabriel leaned closer. "Are you sure?"

Daniel smiled but said nothing. The happiness felt like a butterfly dancing inside his chest. Gabriel watched him like a curious puppy; pondering over Daniel's strange behavior, when trouble arrived, walking confidently and smiling wickedly.

Donald and Rufus, the two biggest boys in Primary Two Diamond, were known for one thing: making smaller children uncomfortable. Teachers called them "birds of the same feather." Other pupils simply moved out of their way. They walked across the playground with slow, deliberate confidence, eyes scanning until they found exactly who they were looking for.

They had both been in the Science Fair hall on Friday and they had seen everything. Donald walked over and grabbed Bright's wrist, he lifted it up to examine his watch with exaggerated smile.

“Wow,” he said loudly. “This watch is very fine o. Did your uncle send it from abroad? special imported materials, abi?”
Rufus snickered loudly. A few children nearby stopped and turned to watch.

“Or maybe it was polished in India first before he sent it. Very special polishing,” Rufus laughed.

There was more laughter from them and the other children. They had watched Bright get caught in front of Doctor Mercury, in front of the whole hall. They had waited three days for this moment; sharpened their words carefully, now, they were here to make sure that Bright remembered it.

Bright’s jaw tightened, his legs shook as he looked from one mean face to the other. Daniel and Gabriel both went still, the chin chin bag forgotten between them. They knew that the old Bright would have replied immediately with something even grander, something that turned humiliation to performance. But the old Bright had already tried that at the science fair and it had not worked. They hoped that this new Bright would tell the truth this time.
Bright looked at Gabriel. Gabriel gave the smallest nod.
Bright took a slow breath and looked Donald in the eye.

“My Uncle Femi bought it for me at ShopRite in Amuwo,” he said. “It was my birthday gift.”
Donald blinked. That was not the answer he had prepared for.
“ShopRite in Amuwo? Not abroad?”
Bright shook his head.
“No. ShopRite in Amuwo. Gabriel has been there. He can tell you.”
“I have been there,” Gabriel announced proudly.

Donald stared at Bright for a long time, searching for the crack, the small sign that meant a lie was hiding underneath. Bright looked at him steadily. For the first time, Donald found nothing to work with. He frowned, dropped Bright’s wrist and walked away with Rufus. The small crowd drifted off, the moment was over.

Suddenly, a loud scream came from the direction of the swings. A boy named Alfred had been running too fast, his shoelace came loose, he fell hard on the concrete, and he began to cry.

Mrs. Bidemi the care giver was on the other side of the playground with another crying child. Mr. Bolaji, the school bus driver, called out amidst the gathering crowd.
“Is there anyone here who knows first aid?”
Gabriel raised his hand quickly.

“My brother Daniel!” he shouted. “He knows about medicine!”

Everyone looked at Daniel. Daniel felt his stomach tighten. He had read about first aid many times, and had practiced on Gabriel’s dramatic imaginary injuries, but this was a real cut, and a boy staring up at him with frightened eyes.
He whispered a prayer under his breath: “Lord, help me now,” and walked forward.
“My name is Daniel,” he said gently to the crying child. “I am going to help you. What is your name?”
“Alfred,” he said, crying.
“Okay, Alfred. You are going to be fine. Just stay still for me.”
He knelt and examined the wound carefully, a deep scrape, bleeding but not serious. He looked up at Gabriel.
“Gabriel, please get the first-aid box from the reception room.”
Gabriel ran off and returned quickly, holding the first aid box like a warrior carrying sacred treasures.
“The medicine has arrived!” he shouted loudly.

Daniel cleaned the wound with antiseptic, and wrapped the knee with
a bandage. Alfred had stopped crying. He watched Daniel work with wide, curious eyes. He smiled weakly.

“It doesn’t hurt anymore.”
“Well done, Daniel,” Mr. Bolaji placed a hand on Daniel’s shoulder.
“Thank you, sir,” Daniel replied shyly.
A little girl nearby touched Gabriel’s hand.
“My tooth is shaking.”
Gabriel gasped. “Doctor Daniel, another emergency!”

Daniel smiled. “It is a milk tooth. It will fall out on its own. You are completely fine.”
The school principal, Mrs. Tochukwu Madu, had been watching them without being noticed. She walked over slowly and smiled at Daniel.
“I hear we have a young doctor in our school.”
Daniel bowed his head. “I just helped because I could, ma.”
“That is exactly what a good doctor says. You showed courage, calmness and wisdom today. Well done, Daniel.”

A gentle warmth spread through Daniel’s chest. Deep inside, a quiet joy was growing, like a light slowly burning brighter. He was becoming the person he was meant to be, one small step at a time.

That afternoon, the three boys walked home together. It was the first time Bright had ever taken their route. He looked around at the familiar

houses; the buka with its pepper soup smell, the noisy mechanic workshop, the white garment church with the big yellow sign, as though seeing Festac Town properly for the first time.

"Bright," Gabriel said, "you have a shining hat today."
"What does that mean?" Bright asked.
"It means you chose the right thing even when it was hard. When you do that, your hat shines. You cannot always see it yourself, but others can," Gabriel explained.
Bright smiled shyly. "When Donald and Rufus came… I almost lied again, but after I told the truth, I felt better. I will never lie again."
Daniel nodded. "You did well, Bright."
Bright looked at Daniel, the older boy who had barely spoken to him before today. Coming from Daniel, those three words meant a lot to him.

At home, Daniel told their mother everything that happened in school over dinner. Lillian listened carefully. When he finished, she reached across the table and held his hands for a moment.

"God will keep opening doors for you, Daniel," she said. "You only need to keep walking through them."
"I helped too. I carried the first-aid box," Gabriel announced.

"You did well, Gabriel," Lillian patted his head.
"I ran very fast."
"I know you did," she nodded calmly.
"I was practically flying."
"You were not flying, Gabriel," she laughed and continued, "Bright needs our prayers. Real change is a battle. He won one round today, but there will be more rounds. We must keep standing with him."
She looked at her boys with pride, loving them in the quiet, steady way only a mother could. Her eyes rested on them for a moment, and then she broke the silence.
"We must also pray for Donald and Rufus," she added.

The boys looked surprised at their mother, and were speechless for once. She had said the most unexpected thing in the world.

That night, after prayers, Daniel lay on his bed. He brought out his notebook from under his pillow, and wrote:

Walking in the light is not one big decision; it is a hundred small ones, made every single day.

The next day, something happened that none of them had planned, and it would bring everything together in a way only God could have arranged.

QUESTIONS

Objectives

1. Why did Donald and Rufus come to mock Bright on the playground?
   a. They wanted to take his watch b. They love Bright c. They had both been at the science fair and witnessed everything.

2. How did Bright feel after telling the truth to Donald and Rufus?
   a. He felt better b. He felt bad c. He felt foolish

3. What did Daniel use to treat Alfred's wound?
   a. Only water b. Antiseptic and a bandage c. Powder and plaster

Theory

4. What does Gabriel mean when he said Bright has a shining hat? _____

   _____

5. Do you think you have ever worn a shining hat? Explain._____

   _____

6. Why did Lillian tell her children to pray for Donald and Rufus? _____

   _____

CHAPTER SIX
Walking in the Light

It was a Tuesday afternoon and the final bell at Kings Royal School had just rung. Children poured out of classrooms in the usual happy flood; bags swinging, voices loud, everyone suddenly full of energy that had been sitting quietly through the last lesson. Daniel and Gabriel met at their usual spot by the school gate, Gabriel already talking before Daniel had seen him.

"Daniel. Did you know that octopuses have three hearts and a snail can sleep for three years?" Gabriel shouted, waving both hands.
"Why are you telling me this?" Daniel asked.
"Three hearts and three years of sleep sounds wonderful."
"You already sleep like that on Saturdays."
"That is different. The snail has no choice…"
Then he stopped talking. His eyes had moved past Daniel and fixed on someone standing outside the gate.
Daniel turned to see what Gabriel was staring at. His mouth opened in surprise.

Their father stood outside the gate in his lawyer's suit, his laptop bag resting at his feet. He watched the children coming out with a calm, unhurried smile.

Daddy never came to pick them up. Not on a Tuesday. Before he could think anymore about it, Gabriel ran across the pavement.

"Daddy!" he screamed.
He ran straight into their father's arms, and their father caught him, laughing, and lifted him up.
Daniel walked over more slowly, but he was smiling widely.
"Good afternoon, Daddy. Did something happen?" Daniel asked.
"I finished from court early," Mr. Simon smiled, "I decided to come back and walk my boys home."

Gabriel turned and saw Bright coming through the gate, his school bag over one shoulder, walking with his usual unhurried pace. His face when he saw Mr. Simon went immediately uncertain. He had never properly met Gabriel's father before.

"Daddy, this is my friend Bright. I have told you about him."
Bright stood still, holding his lunch box tightly. Mr. Simon looked at him, the way he looked at people in court to form a true opinion. He smiled warmly and extended his hand.
"Hello, Bright. I am glad to finally meet you."

"Good afternoon, sir," Bright shook his hand.
"Are you walking our way?"
"Yes, sir. Part of the way," Bright answered.
"Then walk with us," Mr. Simon smiled at him. The four of them set off together. The afternoon sun was warm on their backs. They walked past the buka with its pepper soup smell, past the mechanic's workshop clanging away cheerfully.

Gabriel talked as he always did, about the science fair; about Alfred's knee, about Doctor Mercury, about octopuses and the snail. Mr. Simon listened with the patient attention of a man who understood that children talk so that someone will listen. As they passed the white garment church with the yellow sign, Gabriel pointed at Bright.

"Daddy. Tell Bright what you always tell us, about walking in the light."
Mr. Simon looked at Bright, who was walking quietly beside Daniel, saying little but listening to everything.
"What do you know about light, Bright?"
"It…helps you see where you are going, sir. When it is dark, you can fall down," Bright replied.
"Yes. That is exactly right."

Mr. Simon was quiet for a moment as they walked.

“The Bible says God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. When we walk with God; when we choose honesty, kindness, patience, and courage, we are walking in his light. It does not mean we won’t make mistakes, it means that when we fall, we get up and walk toward the light again.”

They reached the mango tree where Bright’s road branched away from theirs. He stopped and turned to face them. For a moment, nobody spoke. Then Mr. Simon placed a hand gently on Bright’s shoulder, then on Gabriel’s, and on Daniel’s. He bowed his head.

“Lord, I pray for these three boys. Give them courage to choose truth even when it is hard. Give them wisdom to help each other, and may everyone they meet, see Your light in them in Jesus’ name, Amen.”

Bright looked up. His eyes were bright with tears, no one had ever prayed for him on a roadside before.

“Thank you, sir,” he said quietly.
“Keep walking in the light, Bright. We are here if you need us.”
Bright picked up his lunch box and walked down his road. The three Ekenes watched him go.

“Daddy, do you think he will be okay?” Gabriel asked and continued without waiting for a response. “His house is still empty. His parents still work all the time. Mrs. Ngozi is still there.”

“I know. But he is not the same boy he was two weeks ago, and he has you. That matters more than you know.”

They walked the rest of the way home in comfortable quiet. Gabriel
had, remarkably, run out of things to say. Daniel walked with his hands in his pocket, thinking.

He thought about everything that had happened. Gabriel closing his drawing book and opening his maths textbook. Bright looking Donald in the eye and saying ShopRite in Amuwo. Daniel himself kneeling beside Alfred on the concrete and saying: My name is Daniel. I am going to help you. None of it had been planned. It had all just happened, one small moment at a time, each one a choice and a step toward the light.

After dinner, Mr. Simon led a short Bible study from First John chapter one: God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another.

Gabriel listened with his chin resting on his hands. Then he looked up.

“Daddy, do you think Donald and Rufus have shining hats?”
“Not yet, but that is why we pray for them too.”

Then he said something that would stay with them long after that evening had faded into memory.

“We are children of light, and everyone we meet should see that light.”

His voice carried the quiet authority of someone who had built their life on what they believe. He held their gaze, steady and sure.

Gabriel did not look entirely convinced, but he bowed his head when their father prayed for Donald and Rufus.

That night, Daniel sat on the edge of his bed with his notebook opened on his lap. The house was quiet; Gabriel was asleep, his parents’ voices murmuring softly downstairs, the familiar sounds of Festac Town drifting in through the window. He looked at the lines he had written over the past weeks, each one at the end of a memorable day:

- *When I choose patience; stay faithful, and help others, my hat shines brighter.*

- *The secrets of shining hats: discipline, holiness, endurance, love, and running life's race according to God's rules.*

- *Choosing the truth is hard, but it is the first step toward a shining hat.*

- *Wisdom, honesty and teamwork always lead to lasting success, but real change takes time and courage.*

- *Walking in the light is not one big decision; it is a hundred small ones, made every single day.*

He read them all slowly. Then he added one final line, closed his notebook, and turned off the light.

- *Tomorrow, I will choose again, and the day after. That is what it means to walk in the light.*

End

QUESTIONS

Objectives

1. Why did Mr. Simon come to Kings Royal School that afternoon?
   a. His car broke down near the school b. He had a meeting with Mrs. Tochukwu Madu
   c. He finished from court early and chose to walk his boys home

2. What did Mr. Simon do when they reached the junction where Bright's road branched off?
   a. He gave Bright money b. He prayed for all three boys c. He invited Bright to come home with them.

3. What does 'walking in the light' mean according to Mr. Simon?
   a. Walking only during the day b. Carrying a torch wherever you go c. Choosing honesty, kindness, patience, and courage.

Theory

4. Describe how Bright had changed by Chapter Six.

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5. What prayer did Mr. Simon say for Daniel, Gabriel, and Bright?

_____

_____

6. Do you think walking in the light is always easy? Explain your answer using the story.

_____

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:JOIN THE SHINING HATS CLUB

Daniel and Gabriel discovered that wearing a shining hat means choosing kindness, courage, honesty, and walking in God's light.
You can wear a shining hat too!

This week, try to shine by:

• Helping someone who needs it.

• Telling the truth even when it is hard.

• Showing kindness to a friend.

• Doing the right thing when no one is watching.

When you do these things, your life shines brightly.

Share your shining hat moment with your teacher, parent, or church leader.

Coming Next in the Shining Hats Series- Book 2: Living in the Light.

Gabriel begins to discover his own dream, and it is louder, funnier, and more surprising than anyone expected.

Bright takes his first steps toward a faith of his own, but his home is still very quiet, and Mrs. Ngozi's words still echo.

Rita has been in Daniel's class for two years. When she finally finds the courage to ask Daniel for help with her schoolwork, he said yes without hesitation. But Rita's struggles run deeper than schoolwork, and walking someone into the light takes patience, kindness, and more courage than Daniel expected.

Gabriel set his sights on the most unlikely pupils in the school- Donald and Rufus. Everyone avoids them, but Gabriel walks straight toward them.

New choices. New test. New chances to walk in the light.

GLOSSARY

- **Admiration:** A feeling of respect or liking of someone because of what they did.
- **Alarming:** Something that made people feel worried or afraid.
- **Antiseptic:** A substance used to clean wounds and prevent infection.
- **Buka:** A small local place where people buy food.
- **Buzzing:** A low humming sound like the sound a bee makes.
- **Clanging:** A loud metal sound, like when two metal things hit each other.
- **Deacon:** A church leader who helps the pastor and church members.
- **Dramatic:** Acting in an exaggerated or overexcited way.
- **Drifted:** To move slowly without control.
- **Embarrassed:** Feeling shy, like you want to hide because something uncomfortable happened in front of other people.
- **Exaggeration:** Making something sound bigger or better than it is.
- **Fellowship:** A time when people gather to share, pray, or talk together in a friendly way.
- **Forsake:** To leave or abandon someone.
- **Gasped:** A quick, sharp breath, out of surprise or

shock.

- **Grander:** Bigger, more impressive, or more special than something else.
- **Grinned:** To smile a big, wide smile.
- **Groaned:** Make a deep sound because of pain, tiredness, or annoyance.
- **Hesitation:** A short pause because someone is unsure what to do or say.
- **Label:** A small piece of paper or tag that tells the name of something.
- **Mischievous:** Liking to play tricks or cause small trouble in a playful way.
- **Poked:** Pushed someone or something lightly with a finger or object.
- **Pondering:** Thinking deeply about something.
- **Scriptures:** The holy writings in the Bible.
- **Scanning:** Looking quickly but carefully to find something.
- **Shrugged:** To raise your shoulders up and then drop them down quickly.
- **Snickered:** Laughed quietly in a sneaky or teasing way.
- **Spun:** To turn around very quickly.
- **Uncertain:** not sure about something.

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